

Message Text

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10
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 FBO-02 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00

PER-01 A-01 SY-05 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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R 200455Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6890
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 2001

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AEMR ECRE LA
SUBJECT: FLOOD DANGER LESSENS IN VIENTIANE

REFS: A VIENTIANE 1927, B VIENTIANE 1962

SUMMARY: THE FLOOD THREAT TO VIENTIANE HAS ABATED FOR THE TIME
BEING AS THE MEKONG RIVER LEVEL HAS BEGUN DROPPING. BUT UPSTREAM
FLOODING AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PREVIOUS YEARS INDICATE THAT VIENTIANE
MAY STILL BE FLOODED IN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MEKONG RIVER LEVEL IN VIENTIANE PEAKED AT 11.27 METERS
AUGUST 17, COMPARED TO AN 11.5 DANGER LEVEL, BUT HAS DROPPED TO
10.70 METERS AUGUST 20. THE CURRENT ALSO REMAINS STRONG, WHICH
INDICATES IN PART THAT THERE IS NO MAJOR DOWNSTREAM BLOCKAGE WHICH
HAS OFTEN CAUSED THE WATER TO BACK UP AND FLOOD VIENTIANE IN THE
PAST. IT ALSO INDICATES, HOWEVER, THAT PLENTY OF WATER IS STILL
COMING DOWN FROM UPSTREAM. THE LAO INFORMATION MINISTRY
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VERNACULAR DAILY BULLETIN REPORTED THAT, AT PAK BENG, WEST OF

LUANG PRABANG, THE WATER ROSE TO 28.02 METERS AUGUST 18,
COMPARED TO A 25.50 METER DANGER LEVEL.

2. THERE HAS BEEN NO RAIN IN THE VIENTIANE AREA SINCE AUGUST 15.
WHILE LOCAL RAINS HAVE ONLY A MINOR AFFECT ON THE LEVEL OF THE
MEKONG, THEY CAN PRODUCE LOCAL FLOOD CONDITIONS IN THE CITY SINCE
THE DRAINAGE OUTLETS INTO THE MEKONG ARE CLOSED OFF THE PREVENT THE
THE SWOLLEN RIVER FROM BACKING UP INTO THE CITY.

3. THE CIVILIAN-MILITARY-GOVERNMENT WORKERS FORCE MOBILIZED ON
AUGUST 16 (REF B) CONTINUES ITS WORK ON THE DIKES
THOUGH THE EFFICACY OF THE OPERATION HAS BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION
AT ONE LOCATION WHERE LABORERS WERE OBSERVED ATTENTIVELY WEEDING
DIKES. A 50-FOOT ROW OF SANDBAGS STANDS BRAVELY BETWEEN THE
RIVER AND THE CITY'S LARGEST HOTEL, THOUGH LESS THAN A BLOCK FROM
THIS DISPLAY, AN AREA OF ONE ACRE WAS FLOODED AS THE RIVER WATER
BACKED UP THROUGH A CITY DRAINAGE OUTLET WHICH WAS INADEQUATELY
CLOSED.

4. EXPERIENCE IN PREVIOUS YEARS ALSO INDICATES THAT, AFTER THE
MEKONG HAS BEGUN TO DROP, IT CAN RISE AGAIN TO FLOOD VIENTIANE.
IN PREVIOUS YEARS FLOODS HAVE OCCURRED AS LATE AS MID-SEPTEMBER.

5. EMBASSY HAS PURCHASED PUMPS AND SAND LOCALLY AND HAS
ORDERED 3,000 SAND BAGS FROM BANGKOK SOME EMBASSY
VEHICLES HAVE BEEN EQUIPPED WITH EXHAUST PIPE EXTENSIONS TO ENABLE
THEM TO OPERATE IN FLOOD CONDITIONS.
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